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Developing Text-Based Writing and Working Through the Revision Process

Valerie Clark
Eastern Illinois University

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Abstract

A *narrative continuation* is designed to assess a student's ability to comprehend a text selection and use their own creativity to redesign the text's conclusion. This study took a narrative continuation writing assessment and analyzed the process which 41 sixth grade students followed, specifically looking at the prewriting and revision procedures. The goal was to determine if the supports and resources provided were effective for the type of writing and student population. Throughout the process, students' behaviors which indicated motivation levels were noted (participation in discussions, level of focus, attentiveness, and amount of redirection required). Student work was then reviewed and assessed with an emphasis being placed on the quality and quantity of textual evidence included, grammar components and motion within the plot. The findings indicated that personal motivation does have an impact on the final product. Findings suggest that a similar process could be applied towards other writing genres, but the application of structured pre-writing discussions and modeling of the independent and peer revision process is necessary for student success.

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Introduction

Writing has become a critical and necessary part of education for students here in Illinois, as well as throughout the country. Based on my own experiences as a teacher and a student, I have seen a major shift in not only how writing is taught, but also why. Within my own district, we teach students three specific styles in order to prepare students for the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR). Unfortunately, my current district is not unique in the choice to specifically focus on only certain writing styles with the intentions of boosting assessment scores and earning regional recognition on standardized assessments. I do not entirely agree with these actions; however, I never want to send a student into an assessment oblivious of what they are about to be asked to comprehend and execute.

During my first year in my current district, I became aware of a gap between the students' ability to orally and textually articulate substantiated ideas. They were relatively comfortable when asked to orally utilize details from specific text during small group or whole class discussion. These same students, though, struggled when they were asked to use those same details in a written response. I want to further evaluate how to potentially close this gap. I believe that there is the possibility of developing more aware and confident writers. This requires specific content vocabulary exploration, which is explicitly used within a text, and is paired with a carefully guided peer and personal revision process.

The students will be guided through the process of writing and revising a narrative continuation. As a class, we will first be reading a fictional short story and defining unfamiliar vocabulary, as well as identifying setting details and character traits. The students will need to use those key components during the writing process in order to complete a genuine continuation. They will also be completing a personal revision check-list, as well as a peer

review prior to polishing their final draft. The check-list will guide each student through analyzing their work, or a peer's, for the presence of the setting details, character traits, correct dialogue punctuation, appropriate transitions and sentence structure. This process is supported by pertinent research literature.

Literature Review

State and national initiatives inform the teacher's employed pedagogy within English/Language Arts (ELA) classrooms. Due to the recent alignment towards the IAR assessment, across seemingly the majority of the state of Illinois, English/Language Arts pedagogy, in particular writing methods and general assessments, have been placed center stage in the classroom. Aside from the pressure to create strong and confident readers, teachers are being encouraged to support competent and objective writers. A nationwide survey of middle schools was completed in 2015 by the Education Trust which determined a small portion of writing assignments were aligned with a grade-appropriate standard, while only an even smaller amount of assignments asked students to write more than a single paragraph (Gallagher, 2017). Within the English language there are four areas of language skills that are continuously being developed throughout one's lifetime: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Of those four areas, writing is commonly viewed as the last skill set to be developed (Ingale, 2017). This should be seen as concerning, especially considering writing is truly a social skill, as it creates a dialogue between the writer and the reader, while concurrently asking the writer to manage and organize a complex series of thoughts rooted within the purpose of the assignment (Graham, Harris, & Santangelo, 2015).

The writing process is one that many students, and teachers, struggle to complete efficiently. Aside from working students through the writing process, educators struggle to get

students to write, partly due to the lack of writing requirement in many courses across the country. It has become evident that many elementary students are not required to develop their writing skills outside of telling fictional or personal narratives, or writing personal opinion pieces (Wang, Matsumura, & Correnti, 2018). This gap in writing style exposure can explain the scarcity of depth within students writing, as well as a lack of confidence. In the state of California, minimal middle school writing assignments require no written component, while there is a growing number of short answer questions which require one to two sentence responses (Gallagher, 2017). The absence of extended writing exposure makes the writing process more tedious than necessary. Aside from lack of writing exposure, many educators find it even more daunting to motivate students to put the applications or skills they have been given, often repeatedly, into effect while completing extended writing tasks or short responses. Motivation and understanding of the task are the critical keys to writing quality and students success (Conner & Moulton, 2000).

Writing is a multilayered and deliberate process. There should be five main components that are combined to complete the writing process (Cox, n.d.). Teachers should guide students through pre-writing, drafting, editing, rewriting and publishing, however, due to timing in the classroom, teachers often eliminate one or more of those components (Ingale, 2017). Pre-writing is essentially, and arguably, one of the most important and difficult components of writing, and it does require quite a bit of additional support for less confident writers. Students benefit from the use of graphic organizers, visual reminders of discussions and lists created from brainstorming (Cox, n.d.). That being said, brainstorming should include key vocabulary and a well-rounded discussion in order to act as an effective foundation for the writing process.

Brainstorming is an imperative step in developing narrative writing products. In order to make the brainstorming process meaningful, it is valuable for teachers to guide students to look at their own personal experiences, whether that be through guided inquiry, practicing with specific genres (i.e. narratives, persuasive, poetry), or based on thinking processes (i.e. comparing, evaluating, predicting). By structuring the brainstorming period, educators have the opportunity to set specific goals for the student group as a whole, but also to supply more specific supports and goals for writers who may be at a lower level. Some contend the educator should use this time to model and specify goals or elements to include within the writing task (Troia, 2007). No matter what the format or goal of the writing may be, it is the student ownership behind the writing process which allows students to feel in command of their personal writing projects (Whitaker, n.d.). Personal experiences do not need to be particularly deep emotional realizations, but can be as simple as focusing on personal interests or goals they have for later on in life. No matter which route a teacher may decide to use to guide students into the writing process, the focus should be placed on the students' ownership and connection to translating their experiences into well-organized, elaborate thoughts. It was discussed that when students are writing responses and analyzing, they are capable of learning and remembering more meaningful content (Gallagher, 2017).

Writing Genres

Reading is a skill that not only supports academic success within English- Language Arts classrooms, but across all content areas. Within the Grade 6 Reading: Literature Standards from Common Core, students are expected to be exposed and guided through the process of identifying key details and using textual evidence to reach conclusions related to the content (CC-ELA-RL6.1-3, CC-ELA-RI6.7) (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices

& Council of Chief State School [NGA & CCSS], 2010). Over the course of a student's education, there is the expectation that the complexity and content of literature mature with each student's mastery of these skills. Students who are more frequently writing in a structured format within grade levels one to six displayed better quality of writing, but also developed better reading comprehension skills coincidentally (Graham, Harris & Santangelo, 2015). There is a growing level of concern regarding the transition into middle level writing, as prior to the division within the standards, reading and writing were seen as two separate educational elements, but now students are being required to navigate the two components simultaneously (Wang, Matsumura, & Correnti, 2018).

Writing is, again, a routinely implemented skill which appears across all content areas. According to the Grade 6 Writing Standards from Common Core, students in sixth grade will be able to fluently state an argument, with supports and clear reasoning, by the time they advance to the next grade level. The ability to form an argument and defend it can be practiced across multiple content areas, making it one of the more exposed writing skills within the sixth-grade curriculum. Creating arguments is beneficial and helps students to develop critical thinking skills, which allow for open-minded collaboration and for students to consider multiple perspectives on a topic (Dickson, 2004). The application of a thoroughly researched and supported argument can be an incredibly valuable linguistic skill, whether it is presented within the context of writing or in discussion.

Argumentative is not the only writing style which requires the integration of research or evidence. Informative or expository writing, which have become increasingly common within sixth-grade curriculum, are designed for students to share what they have learned through research and discussion, or even prior knowledge (CC-ELA-W6.2-4). The use and

implementation of informative writing has become an increasingly critical part of social studies and science curriculum across the country. Young writers require substantial brainstorming and scaffolding when presented with a complex or less familiar topic (Dickson, 2004). These types of tasks are frequently presented within the context of social studies or science curriculum. Without the combination of social language and cognitive or motivational viewpoints, mastery of any of the Common Core standards would not occur at the rate that is necessary for student success across grade levels (Graham, Harris, & Santangelo, 2015). Continual growth is critical for the development and maintenance of strong, well-rounded writers. The central role of writing within the context of knowledge organization requires for the writer to have a foundation of not only grammatical tools, but also a working understanding of the context surrounding the prompt or task (Goth et al., 2010).

Narrative, or creative, writing does not commonly cross over among content areas. The elements that create the foundation of narrative writing are also more adjustable in comparison to argumentative or expository writing. Students have the ability to structure their story in a format that fits the plot and they are not forced to maintain the *five-paragraph* construction that so many learners rely upon. Although a particular structure is not required within narrative writing, there are certain elements necessary to be included in a piece before it can fall into the narrative category, particularly point of view, omniscience, or the writer's knowledge of the subject, and tone, which needs to be portrayed through the character interactions and thoughts (Coulter & Smith, 2009). The development of these components is further deemed critical though the examination of the Grade 6 Writing Standards from Common Core. It is explicitly stated in the Grade 6 Writing Standards from Common Core, which are acknowledged nationally and within the state of Illinois, students will need to develop dialogue, use descriptive language and sensory

details, as well as fluently merge events, characters and the setting in order to master narrative writing (CC-ELA-W6.3). These writing styles and skills are built upon in each following year, so it is crucial for a solid foundation to be created as early as possible. There is the concern that the rigor being required to meet or master the previously stated standards is not uniform across states or even districts. The opportunities being presented should be designed to challenge the students and, in theory, should include a broad range of complexities, although should not be influenced by the educators' personal comforts with any particular writing genre (Wang & Matsumura, 2019). In order for a standard to truly be mastered, educators must offer multiple and frequent chances for exposure and practice within each writing genre. Writing is fundamentally complex and requires simultaneous acknowledgment of a variety of elements (Goth et al., 2010).

Revision Process

A key element that is often overlooked within the writing process is revising. Revision fosters a strong understanding of audience and purpose within their writing (Peterson, 2003). Peer editing, or revising, also needs to be purposeful and should have a focus, besides simply identifying punctuation or spelling errors. This can be incredibly challenging for writers who struggle (Troia, 2007; Zhang, Schunn, & Baikadi, 2017). It can be demanding to ask students to focus on offering feedback regarding punctuation, and these minor pieces of feedback could potentially have little impact on the overall quality of writing. Instead of requesting students to correct their peers' work, the implementation of explicit goal setting becomes critical to not only the writing process as a whole, but also within the revision portion. In order for there to be success within the revision component, it is necessary for educators to provide clear and thorough scaffolding for all students (Zhang, Schunn, & Baikadi, 2017).

The revision discussion should not only include how to identify grammatical errors, but how to provide constructive feedback towards elaboration and word choice. The overall goal for this process is to help students become more confident and effective writers through meeting their personal goals. These goals, which should help guide the writer and their peers, ensure alignment with the original writing task and assist with the expectation of content and quality of writing (Zhang, Schunn, & Baikadi, 2017). It is not always realistic for all students to set these writing goals, so it may be necessary for the educator to set initial writing goals for all students which align with curriculum objectives, but leave opportunity for individual development and targets to be set. Formative assessment is an integral part of CCSS, and by supporting all students through the revision process, it becomes more evident if the goals and skills highlighted within the brainstorming period have been met or included (Graham, Harris, & Santangelo, 2015).

Writing does not fit into a single mold, which makes it an on-going developmental process. Through the exposure of a variety of writing styles and structures, students should not only become competent writers, but also use those tools to confidently share ideas and thoughts in relation to the texts they are expected to utilize across all content areas. The importance of creating and supporting a process that structures not only students' thinking and writing structure, but also the revision process that followed is increasingly necessary (Graham, Harris, & Santangelo, 2015). In theory, this should transfer across content-area borders. The integration of informative writing into multiple academic areas, has allowed for more students to have confidence with that process, however the lack of creative outlets within social studies and the sciences leaves many students struggling to achieve success with the process of story-telling.

The research literature shapes this inquiry. The intent is to explore what happens when students are given the guided opportunity to use textual evidence and their own creativity to complete a fictional story which has already been structured for them. The employed methods extend from the research literature to make this particular project novel.

Methods

The writing process can be tedious and time consuming, however with this particular writing task, it is a thought out and guided experience for the students. The purpose of the assessment is for students to create a text-based continuation of a pre-selected narrative using identified text details, students are expected to create logical creative endings of the story, and it is completely realistic for the new endings to not match the original. Although the expectation of the writer is to produce a unique and logical ending, there are still specific elements that each student must incorporate into their narrative.

Content

Dragon, Dragon by John Gardner (1975) is a fictional short story. This text was selected because it is a supplementary text which is included within the curriculum set, Realize by Pearson, used by all three grade levels at this particular middle school (Brozo et al., 2015). The team of teachers decided it would be the best option for this writing assessment due to the text breaks and progression of the story; there was a natural pause which left opportunity for the students to recreate the ending. The story features a medieval king who is being tormented by a dragon. He challenges his citizens to defeat the dragon in an attempt to regain control of his realm. The local cobbler vocalizes his doubts, which causes his three sons to each try their hand at becoming a hero in the hopes of claiming half the kingdom, the princess’s hand in marriage, or potentially both.

The story ultimately ends with the youngest of the three sons destroying the dragon and becoming a hero, however, as this assessment is designed to foster creative thinking, the students' version ends as the youngest son preparing to fight the dragon. This text was specifically chosen due to the natural pause and structure within the text that allowed for the true ending to be removed. The process of writing a narrative continuation requires the writer to carefully analyze not only the content of a specific text, but also the style and structure. A true continuation not only extends textual details, but also blends the original author's style, mannerisms and mechanics. In theory, it should be a seamless transition between the two pieces of writing.

Pedagogy

The initial plan would be to present the short story *Dragon, Dragon* by John Gardner. The class would spend two to three class periods (approximately 45 minutes) reading and discussing the vocabulary and history behind the story. The story itself is eight and a half pages, however, the students would only receive the first seven pages. The ultimate goal is for each student to use this short story to create a text-based narrative continuation which features at least ten character traits and at least four setting details that come directly from the text. Each student would have their own copy of the story, which would allow them to highlight and annotate along with the class, but also allowing the individual to make additional personalized notes. These notes could include definitions of unknown vocabulary or clarification of character traits that are highlighted during our whole class analysis.

After completing a rough draft of their initial continuation, with the assistance of a revision checklist, students would be asked to reread their story and identify each of the requirements on the checklist within their writing. If an element is missing from their writing,

such as a character trait or setting detail, this would be their chance to revise their original draft. Before the final draft is submitted, the students would complete a peer revision of a classmate's narrative continuation. Using the same checklist that was used during the personal review, students would be asked to find the required elements and make suggestions for improvements.

Assessments

The rubric was designed by the three sixth-grade teachers at a middle school in northern Illinois to mirror the key elements evaluated by the IAR assessment. The main focus would be placed on the student's ability to utilize content from the provided text and then to continue and rationally conclude the story using the previously identified details. The majority of possible points fall under content development, language vocabulary, and mechanics; these elements total to 73 possible points out of the total 100 possible. Besides being evaluated on their ability to integrate textual details and use appropriate language for the topic, the majority of points are coming from use of proper mechanics (complete sentences, capitalization, punctuation, spelling).

In order for students to reach the goals set by the rubric, they will be given two opportunities for revision by completing a personal and then a peer review. These reviews are guided by a checklist which asks each student if certain aspects are present and, if so, to identify them in the writing. If an element is missing, it should be noted, and then suggestions or corrections are to be made. Prior to the completion of these reviews, as a whole class there will be a discussion of ways to give positive feedback or helpful suggestions, instead of insulting or rewriting a peer's narrative. Students will participate in a discussion of proof-reading marks (i.e. how to insert punctuation, make spelling corrections, indicate a new paragraph, capitalize).

Data pool

Writing samples will be collected from 41 students, all of whom are sixth grade students (ranging in ages from 11-12) at Coal City Middle School in Coal City, Illinois. All the students will be given an identical writing prompt and will follow the same pre-writing process. Students will be reading an unfinished short story, *Dragon, Dragon* by John Gardner (1975). As they read, they will be identifying key setting details and character traits. Once they finish reading, they will be asked to create a logical ending for the short story using the details they collected and organized with the assistance of a graphic organizer packet. Participants will be given ten sessions of approximately 45 minutes each to complete this task. During these sessions, participants will be given opportunities to edit and correct their writing context and structure with the help of peers and an editing checklist.

Data sample

All 41 students from the data pool will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction provided throughout the pre-writing process and peer revision support. By using all participating students, it gives a complete representation of the pool and a more consistent opportunity of procedural reflection. It is so common that an educator's expectations become varied based on their relationship with each student. It could be simple to select the top ten writers from the data pool, and come to the conclusion that the instructional process and review system was a success. However, this does not allow for reflection and growth as an educator.

Findings

While reviewing all the collected data, several patterns became apparent. The level of individual motivation was a key factor in the level of success achieved by each student. Aside from motivation, the reliance and referencing of resources provided and created during all stages of the writing process also showed an impact on the overall success of participating individuals.

Evidence of Motivation

Throughout the instructional and writing process, it became increasingly apparent that the students fell into one of two categories. They were either very motivated and truly interested in creative writing or showed no motivation and had no interest in the topic or process. The majority of students (n = 30; 73%) were truly interested and showed investment in the topic and their final product. The students' investment could be observed through their participation and the questions asked during discussion, utilization of resources and support provided, and the overall effort put into the task.

During the first four days of the instructional process, the main indicators of motivation were focus and participation. Over these few days, the center of instruction was on the content of the writing task, the expectations and even more so on the short story, *Dragon, Dragon* by John Gardner, which served as a foundation for the students' narrative continuations. *Dragon, Dragon* was read the first time in order to establish an understanding for the plot and to begin identifying the style of the original author. During the second reading, students were directed to annotate for specific details. While reading, a student's level of focus could be observed through their participation, specifically whether or not they were highlighting and taking the notes that were identified through the whole class discussion. These students were not necessarily contributing to the conversation, but they were notably following what was being said through their physical

reactions (e.g., nodding their heads, following conversation with eyes) and the work being collected within their planning packets. This demonstrable pattern suggests the majority of students are making positive steps towards meeting all personal and assessment goals. The annotations being created indicate that the structed discussion is beneficial to the brainstorming and initial planning process.

Student focus showed steady growth during the initial brainstorming and annotation process. On the first day of the annotating and brainstorming stages of writing process, most students (n = 33; 80%) appeared focused, while only a few students (n = 9; 22%) participated in the discussions. Within this six-day period, students showed the lowest level of motivation on the first day of instruction. As the instructional process progressed forward, the students showing motivation increased. On day two, the number of focused students made positive growth (n = 36; 88%). This pattern continued into the third day when the vast majority (n = 38; 93%) showed engagement. The peak in focus and mental engagement occurred on the fourth and fifth days when nearly all students (n = 40; 98%) participating made notable progress with their annotations and the planning packet. On the sixth day, focus began to decline slightly (n = 39; 95%), but the majority still maintained the focus that was previously observed.

The instructional method and purpose appeared to have an impact on an individual's level of focus and engagement. Once students began the actual writing and continuation of the original story on the seventh day of instruction, most students (n = 38; 93%) displayed focus and engagement, however there was an observable shift in the level of focus shown between the two groups of participating students. In the first group, all students (n = 16; 100%) maintained a degree of focus and made positive progress with their writing and revisions for three consecutive days, yet in the second group of students the level of overall focus began to drop, although it was still the majority (n

= 22; 88%), acting engaged on the seventh and eighth days which continued to drop down to 19 students displaying these behaviors. Overall, both groups showed a decline in focus on the final day when students were asked to apply peer editing to their final drafts. At this final stage, a greater part of the participating students (*n* = 32; 78%) were focused. Generally, the majority of both groups demonstrated focus and consistent engagement.

Students' participation in discussion indicated motivation and investment. In the first four days of the brainstorming and planning process, students were identifying and highlighting explicitly stated and implied character traits, setting details, as well examining new vocabulary, frequently used verbs and transitions, and figurative language that the original author uses to maintain the reader's attention. Students who were active in the discussion not only were eager to share contextual significant information, but were also able to make stronger and more relevant connections between the characters and the traits they were given by the author. For example, highly motivated students could explain why it was logical for the princess to not be impressed by the first two brothers. This allowed for a relationship to develop between the youngest brother and the princess, and allowed for choices to be made by the students in terms of the type of ending they envision using the textual evidence gathered during annotation process.

The discussion process served as the focal point of the beginning of the instructional period. During the first instructional day, very few of the students (*n* = 9; 22%) actively participated in the introduction of the writing task. These students asked clarifying questions and made connections between the medieval setting of the story and activities or projects they had experienced in previous grade levels or classes. As the discussion continued, a growing number of students (*n* = 16; 39%) participated on the second day. This was followed by a slight decrease of participation (*n* = 15; 37%) during the third instructional period, however, there was a slight upswing during the following

class period (*n* = 16; 39%). This pattern of growth continued into the final two days of discussion (*n* = 18; 44%, *n* = 19; 46%). The increased participation suggests a growth in confidence as the discussions moved forward. As the structure became more familiar and progressed, it gave students, who typically struggled, a chance to process the information and requirements which allowed for more physical involvement with the content. These students' actions suggest that thorough brainstorming and collaboration are necessary prior to completing any writing task. However, since only about half of the students participated with the observed format, there seems to be a lack of interest or enthusiasm with the task. The split motivation of the group could also be connected to a gap in willingness to follow the initial planning process. So many students prefer to just jump into a creative writing task without planning or processing the requirements of the assignment. There were comments made by some unmotivated students that the annotation process was "taking too long" or "too difficult" and they questioned the necessity of taking notes for a creative writing piece. This causes a belief to form that there may be call for more exposure to the narrative continuation structure and possibly examples prior to the students creating their own with *Dragon, Dragon*.

Positive Student Illustrations

Throughout this process, it appeared that some students thrived under this instructional format, while others did not. Michelle [all names are pseudonyms] was a strong example of a student who excelled throughout. Prior to this writing process, she was the ideal student who would participate in discussions and lessons with respect towards her own learning and her classmates. Not only was she respectful, but Michelle also pushed herself to be fully engaged with the content. She showed that she was willing to put forth the work, time and effort in order to create a logical and well-structured narrative continuation. Michelle showed focus 100 percent of the days included within this process. In the initial days, she did not immediately join

the discussion. However, through her body language and notes collected, she demonstrated her understanding and eagerness to apply not only the textual evidence introduced from the original short story, but intertwine her own unique ideas into the content. Once Michelle began participating in the discussion vocally, not only did she contribute explicitly stated character traits (i.e., the eldest son was described as clever, the middle son was extremely strong, the youngest was humble), but she also added depth by sharing the implicit details she identified. For example, there were very few explicit details connected to the princess, but while looking at the attribution tags and verbs used in conjunction with the princess, Michelle was able to explain to her classmates that the princess had a negative attitude and appeared to have a strong sense of entitlement.

When given the time to begin the writing task, Michelle maintained her level of focus and on multiple occasions was overheard redirecting other students around her. She also took several opportunities to ask clarifying questions or to ask about wording, specifically when it came to recreating the implicit character traits that she had identified during the class discussion (e.g., "Which verb would be the stronger option to show a bratty attitude?" and "How else can I describe someone being humble or average?"). Aside from the character traits, she was intentional with where she included the setting details, as well as continued the using similar transitions and figurative language phrasing that mimicked the original author. There were minor punctuation errors noted on the peer editing checklist, otherwise the feedback she received was positive and indicated that she had met the goals she set for herself. The content goal indicated that she was striving to include five implicit character traits out of the ten required and her personal writing goal dictated that she planned to focus on correct dialogue format each time a character spoke. Michelle included six implicit traits throughout her writing, and used fourteen

traits total, although only required ten. As mentioned previously, she had a few punctuation errors, but overall the structure of her included dialogue was consistent and correct.

Michelle represented 12 percent of the participating students who earned a score of 90 or higher out of 100 points. This sub group scored in the excels or exceeds category in 11 of the 15 rubric criteria. Not only did their content align with the rubric and task requirements, but their participation within the brainstorming and planning discussions was evident. It was clear which students pushed themselves to use implicit character traits, and applied the feedback they received from the peer reviews. Their overall content was significantly more detailed and their phrasing showed thought and reflection from their planning packets. As mentioned previously, Michelle showed awareness of basic grammar elements throughout her writing, and considering this portion of the rubric accounted for 40 percent of the assessment, it allowed for her to solidify her spot within the top subcategory of performances.

While Michelle was very detail oriented and focused throughout the entire task, Scotty struggled with maintaining focus, and periodically motivation, yet was still able to successfully complete the continuation task. Scotty illustrates an example of the student population who put forth the effort and showed notable evidence through the written annotations. Although, Scotty and other students were able to show an understanding of the original story through discussion, but there was a disconnect between their verbal understanding and the content of written work, specifically within grammatical elements of writing. He, in particular, showed focus throughout the entire process, however, struggled with maintaining that focus for the duration of each work period. Scotty demonstrated the ability to participate within the discussions, but it was not to the same extent or depth that was offered by Michelle. He participated in two of the six days that required discussion. Scotty fully validated his ability to identify explicitly stated character traits, although he did not

demonstrate the same strength with identifying implicitly described traits. The content was logical and he concluded his continuation using appropriate textual evidence. He included the obvious character traits from the original story, but his writing lacked consistent punctuation usage and paragraph structure.

Scotty required redirection on seven of the ten procedural days, and showed signs of being inattentive during the first two days of the instructional period. The primary reason for redirection came from his focus being placed on time, specifically how much was left until lunch or if his watch was perfectly aligned with the school clocks. Each time he was redirected, he responded promptly and respectfully, although he was inconsistent with how long the redirection request would be effective. The unpredictable nature of Scotty's motivation could also be seen in the depth of the goals he set for himself and how closely he stuck to achieving them. Scotty decided to place his contextual focus on using four medieval times specific vocabulary words within his continuation. This goal was very much achievable. Due to there being a historical element to the topic, which was his preferred genre, Scotty excelled and accurately included eight medieval terms (maiden, knight, ordeal, fief, vassal, king, castle, chivalry). As strong as the contextual goal was, he did not push himself with the same rigor on his personal goal. He set the personal skill goal of capitalizing the first word of each sentence. Again, a very achievable goal, and throughout the majority of his continuation this goal was achieved, however the expectation for personal growth should have been set higher.

Scotty illustrated the performances of nearly half of the participating students, (n = 19; 46%). This sub group scored between 80 and 89 points on the assessment, and predominantly struggled with focus and motivation, not with the content of their narratives. Scotty received excels and exceeds on the rubric under all content related criteria, but it was evident he did not truly apply the

feedback that was offer through the peer review, since there were many punctuation errors and some capitalization mistakes made that should have been caught prior to the final assessment being submitted. Again, overall, Scotty was in the majority when it came to scores and behaviors. He demonstrated the average overall performance from the participating students.

Evidence of Lack of Investment

On the opposite end of the motivation spectrum, there was a small group of students who showed little to no motivation towards the narrative continuation writing task. These students put more effort into avoiding the task requirements and supports offered, than actually participating in discussions or individual work time. This group required frequent redirection or appeared overall inattentive to directions and the writing task. The most common distractions noted were a focus placed on time (i.e., how much is left), decorating the illustrations in the original story, a greater interest in their peers' work, and watching what was happening outside of the classroom through the windows. For a student to be identified as needing redirection, they had to be off-task three or more times during a class period. There were some students who lacked direction one or two times, but this did not impact the quality or quantity of work produced during the period of analysis.

Redirection was seen daily in both groups, but was overall contained to a smaller group of students. There was a pattern of transition days requiring the most redirection as these behaviors were more frequent on those days. On the introduction day, 27 percent (n = 11) of participating students required redirection, and this group was evenly split between the two classes. There was another spike in lack of focus on day seven which was the first day allotted entirely for independent writing time (n = 15, 37%). Throughout the entire process, there was a small group who required redirection (n = 13, 32%), and only a few students (n = 6, 15%) who required redirection on more than one day of instruction. Of this group, only one student needed to be redirected on more than

half of the instructional days. As mentioned previously, the number of students who were involved in some level of redirection was split fairly evenly between each group during each instructional day. Generally, it was the same core students who required the redirection and suggests that they entered the writing task with the mindset to not invest their energy in the assessment. This pattern could also indicate that the students struggling with motivation would benefit from shorter work periods, however, this could cause a complete loss of motivation if the assessment was extended outside of the ten-day time frame.

Inattentiveness was not observed at the same frequency as a lack of direction. Students were perceived as inattentive due to a consistent lack of attention on the writing task during a class period. The students identified as inattentive were redirected, but then quickly returned to the task that required their redirection in the first place. Inattentiveness often caused these students to fall behind the pace of the group. More students appeared inattentive on the first day, when the task was first introduced, than any other day throughout the process (n = 9; 22%). In the first group of students, very few (n = 3, 7%) were observed as inattentive over the first three days of the writing process. After the third day, there were no students displaying inattentive behaviors. However, in the second group of students, inattentive behaviors where seen during seven of the ten class periods. That being said, on the seventh through ninth days of the process, there appeared to be no inattentive behaviors observed in either group. At this point during the assessment timeline, students were working independently, and were not asked to be attentive to discussion, which allowed a slight increase in motivation for the students who had been noticeably struggling in this area. The students showing signs of inattentiveness were more engaged in their own written creations, and the majority remained this way until the final day when a few (n = 2, 5%) returned to those previous behaviors when asked to apply feedback from their peers. These behaviors could have been a result of not understanding

the feedback provided or not being willing to make revisions, which does suggest there was an element of pride to their work.

Observations of Student Struggles

Dennis represented the students who struggled the greatest with applying the content required by the assessment and his behavior. Dennis displayed some of the strongest indicators of being unmotivated and uninvested in the narrative continuation writing task. As described previously, a behavior paired with lack of motivation was avoidance, and Dennis appeared to put more effort into avoiding writing or participating in any capacity than trying to follow the process. He was more invested in monitoring his peers' work and criticizing their progress than applying his focus to the task or the writing goals he had determined for himself. Initially, Dennis set a personal skill goal of "I will use capital letters," but after conferencing, he modified his goal to "I will use capital letters at the beginning of each sentence." Although this was an attainable goal, there appeared to be little effort put into working towards obtaining it as the majority of sentences did not include a capitalized letter at the beginning. Dennis did not identify a content related goal prior to the beginning of his writing process. He did verbally indicate that he would include ten-character traits, however this was never written down to reference while writing and in his final draft there were only five traits included.

Aside from lack of focus on the goals set, Dennis did not appear to acknowledge the majority of the requirements related to the content or grammar skills being assessed. He did not start his continuation at the determined point in the story and the plot was scattered and confusing to follow. He did not include any setting details from the original story; however, he did maintain the correct point of view throughout. Overall, there was a lack of transitions, incorrect paragraph structure and his continuation did not have a clear conclusion, he simply cut it off.

When comparing Dennis's writing to his peers', he lacked details and understanding of the original story. The majority of the students composed continuations which ranged from two to three pages. However, Dennis only wrote half a page, which was further evidence of his persistent and consistent efforts to remain inattentive towards the task at hand. Dennis represents the smallest subgroup, which was an extreme minority of the participating students (n = 2; 5%). This group struggled with the content, but had greater difficulties with the grammatical elements required. That being said, the behaviors and motivation, or lack thereof, were not consistent in this sub group, as Dennis's actions and choices were some of the most extreme examples of being off task.

Many of the same behaviors exhibited by Dennis were also displayed by Jerry. Jerry embodied the student who showed a lack of physical motivation, however was fully capable of demonstrating understanding of all the vocabulary, content, and grammatical elements. He indicated this comprehension through the discussion, but it did not fully translate into his writing. Jerry required redirection on seven of the ten instructional days. Much like Dennis, Jerry appeared more interested in avoiding physically working on the writing task. Jerry, however, was willing to contribute to the discussion regarding character traits, but he would not take notes on any of the characters to use as a reference while writing. His contributions were consistently explicitly stated traits or details. While he did not participate in the annotation and note taking process, he did remain physically engaged throughout the discussions. The majority of his redirections were due to him trying to interact with his peers instead of working. That being said, he was typically able to regain focus and be productive, although this could be quite inconsistent. Due to being unable to consistently focus during the time allotted for writing the continuation, Jerry was moved and given a separate, individual work space for days eight and nine of the process. During this time, he still required redirection, however it was not for socializing, but for staring at the clock and out of the

windows. He was able to complete his continuation on pace with the rest of the group, but this was primarily due to one-on-one assistance from the teacher to complete the final revision steps. Through the entire process, his behavior was never considered inattentive, primarily unfocused.

As distracted and unmotivated as Jerry appeared, he chose to focus his content goal on the number of setting details included from the original text, and identified that he would include four, which was the required amount for full credit on the rubric. He incorporated three, which did not meet his set goal, however showed that he was engaged with the content of the original story. When it came to his personal skill goal, he explicitly stated, "I will make no punctuation errors." As strong as the majority of his content was, he struggled significantly with capitalization and punctuation usage. It was apparent that he did not reference his personal goal while writing, as he made 15 punctuation errors. Jerry did successfully maintain the third person point of view just as the original author used, and was able to create a logical order of events. He included six of the ten requested character traits, all of which were explicitly stated details discussed from the original story, and mostly maintained correct paragraph structures. He did not, however, use transitions to move his continuation forward, but incorporated strong adjectives to help create a clear visual. Jerry was not able to create a definite conclusion for his continuation.

Jerry is a representation of more than half of the participating students (n = 15; 37%). This subgroup showed that they had the capabilities of applying the content to their writing through their participation in the initial discussion. Generally, this subgroup scored primarily within the meets category of the rubric criteria in regards to the content and showed no particular pattern to their scores related to grammar. They either applied the skill (e.g., punctuation, capitalization, spelling) or they completely over looked it. Jerry's subgroup received 70 to 79 points, and typically the less engagement during the discussion, the lower the score earned.

Reliance on Resources and Performance by Highly Motivated Students

Highly motivated students showed greater success with assessed components of the writing task overall. This small sub group of students utilized not only their own skills and resources, but also were attentive to the discussions and peer suggestions.

Grammar

The students who showed consistent motivation (e.g., focused and participating) were much more likely to pay greater attention to capitalization throughout their writing. Although, their initial draft was by no means perfect, it was evident that these students used the power of their motivation to critically apply the feedback they received from their peers and make revisions. In order for a student to receive full credit on the rubric under the capitalization category (ten points), there could be up to two errors made throughout the entirety of their narrative. This small, motivated subgroup was a minority among the participating students (n = 9; 22%). The observable focus from these students revealed consideration for basic writing elements as they worked throughout all phases of their narrative continuations.

Within the scaffolding and planning process, there was repeated discussions regarding necessary elements which required capitalization. At this stage in the students' writing, they are all fully aware and acknowledged that a capital letter at the beginning of each sentence is necessary, as it symbolizes the start of a new thought. In addition to the start of each sentence, students were also guided through a review of proper nouns, while also looking at dialogue and how capitalization is necessary within it. Dialogue structure was explicitly taught in conjunction with the narrative continuation and all students received a reference page in their planning packets illustrating proper structure. The highly motivated students demonstrated more consistent and accurate use of the

reference page than any other group of the participating students. The reference page included where correct grammar application and structure was expected.

The majority of participating students who maintained consistent motivation overall exceeded in demonstrating their grammar skills (*n* = 8; 89%). Every highly motivated student had two or fewer fragments within their writing, which earned them ten points on the rubric (*n* = 9; 100%). This suggests that the sentence structure unit which coincides with the narrative continuation assessment kept basic sentence structure in this group's immediate thoughts during the independent work periods. As mentioned previously, there were capitalization and grammar reference tools included within the planning packet. The highly motivated and attentive students scored either exceeds or meets, according to the rubric, under the punctuation criteria which allowed for up to eight errors to be made. Most of the highly motivated students scored in these two categories (*n* = 7; 78%), and made up 17 percent of the total scores collected. There were, however, a few exceptions among the highly motivated (*n* = 2; 22%), who made nine to twelve errors, which placed them in the does not meet category.

A large portion of students (*n* = 19; 76%) made punctuation errors within lines of dialogue or due to run-on sentences not being correctly separated. Even with the inclusion of the reference page, students still struggled with the structure and format of dialogue punctuation. The quotation marks were the most consistently correct, yet the punctuation marking that marked the ending of what was actually being spoken aloud was commonly missing or misplaced. Both of which were modeled on the reference page several times. Although these errors were overlooked in initial drafts, a few of the more motivated did provide feedback regarding dialogue punctuation and how to revise the errors. This insinuates that the punctuation errors not revised could have been overlooked or the students did not identify the differences between their writing and the reference examples.

Grammar not only includes proper punctuation use, but also incorporates spelling. All of the highly motivated students scored in the exceeds category under the spelling criteria on the rubric. This category allows for up to two errors to be made before losing points. Considering all drafts created during this process were typed, this is not a surprising result. All students had access to the spell check feature, along with a peer, who could assist in spelling.

Motion and Dialogue

The use of dialogue is necessary to move a plot forward. This was firmly emphasized throughout discussions prior to the introduction of this assessment and during the initial planning discussions. Most of the highly motivated students used dialogue wisely and were able to progress their plots appropriately. The most successful integrated transitions and attribution tags, as well as included a variety of alternatives to the verb said. The combination of transitions and vocal description demonstrates an understanding of how conversations move, while allowing the reading to create a visual of the continuation.

Motivation appeared to push dialogue, and the inclusion of details, forward more quickly, as the most highly motivated students did not extend dialogue to a point where all plot motion stopped. They had a goal to get to the end of their continuation, and it was evident as the transitions were frequent and they included a broader variety. Within the initial planning packet, a page was included where students could compile a list of frequently used transitions by the original author, but also create a personal list to offer options for themselves. The rubric only required the use of five different transitions for full points under the organization category; however, the students were encouraged to include eight to ten unique choices.

Use of Textual Evidence

A key element of the writing task was the inclusion of textual evidence allowing for a seamless connection to be made between the original story and the student's work. The majority of highly motivated students scored the full ten points on this component and included ten, or more, pieces of textual evidence related to the characters. During the initial planning periods, the students spent the majority of the discussion focusing on all character traits, both explicitly and implicitly stated. This group of students showed a greater understanding of how to insert the implicit traits through attribution tags added to their dialogue. Overall, over half of the highly motivated (n = 5; 56%) successfully used implicitly stated character traits, while all of the remaining students (n = 4; 44%) utilized explicitly specified traits. This suggests that even though this group was equally motivated, the inclusion of implicit details required more critical thinking and possibly a higher level of personal creativity towards the task. Not all students were equally creative and although given the guidelines to keep their continuations logical, some had a much easier time developing an original plot without second guessing their own skills.

In addition, the highly motivated were fully successfully in all earning excels (n = 9; 100%), which indicates the full possible point value, on the rubric for the inclusion of setting details. This was also a large portion of the annotation and planning discussion. Students were required to identify and include four setting details from the original story. While planning and brainstorming, every student was directed to identify four details and to include a piece of direct evidence to help them reference the detail while writing their continuations. This was the most successful criteria for all of the highly motivated students.

Reliance on Resources and Performance by Inconsistently Motivated Students

Students who showed shifting levels of motivation made up the largest population of participating students. These students showed behaviors that were aligned with desiring success with the task, but for various reasons could not maintain focus or participation throughout the process.

Grammar

Although the highly motivated students did well, they were not the most populous group. There were more students who showed infrequent motivation, than consistent. Their level of care and effort could be observed, but they made seemingly careless errors compared to the highly motivated students who caught and corrected similar imperfections. This is where the attention to the revision feedback came into effect and created a noticeable divide between the two groups of motivated students. The most common errors made were not capitalizing the first word of a sentence, incorrectly capitalizing a non-proper noun or a randomly capitalized word. Due to these common incorrect capitalizations, these students scored under the meets or does not meet categories, which means they made three to eight capitalization errors. None of them made more than eight errors.

Based on the scaffolding provided, and the prior instructional exposure, the errors made demonstrated that the students were engaged in the topic and process of writing a narrative, but did not apply that motivation to the capitalization and grammar elements. All students were given the opportunity to revise their writing, and although capitalization does not necessarily change the meaning of the continuation, it is still a writing skill that should not be ignored.

The patterns observed of errors made in punctuation and spelling were just as sporadic as what was viewed with capitalization errors. Some of the inconsistently motivated (n = 6; 24%)

showed more consideration and care when writing or revising and made nine to twelve errors, which was considered to not meet the punctuation expectation according to the rubric. The majority of this group (*n* = 19; 76%), however, made 13 or more errors, specifically within their dialogue and through run-on sentences. Again, the consistency between students and the commonality of error location demonstrates that the reference page and peer revision feedback were not utilized to their fullest potential. Out of the unpredictably motivated students, a faction (n = 6; 24%) exhibited that they employed the reference resources or their peers' revision suggestions, but still could have maintained a more unfailing level of focus.

The pattern of inconsistency continued when reviewing this groups spelling scores. The greater part of this group (*n* = 18; 72%) had two or fewer errors, which categorized them as exceeding the expectation, but there was small number of students (*n* = 7; 28%) that overlooked three to five errors, which fell into the meets range. The most common spelling mistakes identified were homophones, specifically there/their/they're and to/too. Several students also overlooked the inclusion of texting language and used abbreviations instead of proper grammar.

As unpredictable as this group was with where they would place the most consistent amount of focus or engagement, all students excluded fragments from their writing. This illustrates that the sentence structure unit, which included fragment corrections, was effective and all students were conscious of their wording enough to avoid writing in incomplete thoughts.

Motion and Dialogue

As mentioned previously, dialogue is intended to move a plot forward. This subgroup demonstrated that they understood how dialogue could be effective, however only a few students (n = 3; 12%) were able to keep all of their included conversations purposeful. In addition to the inconsistency of motion in their dialogue, this group was unpredictable in regards to the transitions

incorporated in their continuations. Most of the students (*n* = 19; 76%) met the criteria for the meets category, which signifies that they used transitions throughout most of their narratives. Although there were strong attempts to integrate transitions with the dialogue, this is where almost half the students (*n* = 11; 44%) lost the motivation, or concentration, to stay aligned with original story and the goal of the writing task. The other half of the students were able to maintain their focus and were able to integrate transitions from the original story, and also used their dialogue to move their plot. As this portion of the group (*n* = 14; 56%) demonstrated strong and smart word choice, they lost focus on the structure of the dialogue.

Use of Text Evidence

The inclusion of text evidence was a key element of the writing task. Slightly less more than a quarter of the inconsistently motivated (*n* = 9; 36%) integrated eight- or nine-character traits, which is categorized as exceeding on the rubric. However, the majority (*n* = 16; 64%) used five to seven from the original story and were categorized as meeting the expectation according to the rubric. If all students were able to uphold their focus and participation within the discussions for the entirety of the assessment period, they should have all scored under the excels category and integrated the ten traits requested by the task. Even if a student did not include any implicit traits, they should have been able to achieve this goal.

The writing task requested for students to reutilize four setting details from the original story. This subgroup provided stronger evidence of motivation to meet this requirement. Just under half of the students (*n* = 11; 44%) mentioned three previously identified details in their continuation, while more (*n* = 14; 56%) integrated four or more. This was a key component of the brainstorming discussions and annotations, and reinforces that this group was capable of holding their engagement. It also suggests that due to it being a smaller required element that needed to be explicitly stated,

students who struggled with creative writing did not have to think too critically to include these details.

Reliance on Resources and Performance by Unmotivated Students

The smallest group of participating students were the unmotivated. This group struggled the most with maintaining focus and completing each stage of the writing assessment. The difficulties observed within this group illustrated the need for students to develop their own motivation, but also utilize all available resources.

Grammar

Grammar was the broadest area of struggle for unmotivated students. It claims four categories of criteria on the rubric, which total 40 points. Each category was valued at a maximum of ten points. As described prior, all participating students, including those who displayed unmotivated behaviors (n = 7; 100%), exceeded the expectation of excluding fragments from their writing. However, the same pattern was not observed with run-on sentences, and the majority of unmotivated students (n = 5; 71%) left three or more uncorrected in their final draft. The majority of uninterested students (n = 6; 86%) struggled not only with run-ons, but punctuation inclusion overall. The most common errors were made within dialogue, specifically excluding quotation marks and lacking an ending punctuation mark. Only one student made fewer than 13 errors, however this student only wrote three short paragraphs. This suggests that overall the unmotivated students did not take peer revision suggestions seriously or completely overlooked the feedback provided. The struggles also could be related to the reference resources being ignored and not utilized throughout the writing and revision process.

In addition to a lack of attention that was paid to punctuation, there was also a level of inattentiveness towards capitalization and spelling. Although there were still consistent errors made

with capitalization, this was category where unmotivated students performed the best. More than half the students in this subgroup (*n* = 4; 57%) made fewer than eight errors. Though this could be connected to the length of their continuations and lack of detail provided, which left more room for success since there was less content included. This subgroup was also fairly successful in regards to the spelling criteria. Again, more than half the students (*n* = 4; 57%) made fewer than five errors, most of the errors were related to homophones or abbreviations.

Motion and Dialogue

With previous subgroups, plot movement occurred through dialogue and transitions. This movement was not consistent, or in a few cases, evident within the writing of unmotivated students. Most of this subgroup (*n* = 5; 71%) used appropriate transitions, but did not attempt to use any of the stronger transitional phrases that had been discussed during the brainstorming discussions. A few of the unmotivated students (*n* = 2; 29%) either exempted all transitions or used the same one throughout the entirety of their writing. This insinuates that the lack of engagement and focus during the brainstorming had a negative and clear impact on these students' writing. Prior to this writing task, all participating students received instruction and were assessed over their understand of plot and the necessary elements. All participating students identified as efficient with this content, so there are no gaps in comprehension of the expectation.

The use of conversation lacked purpose for this group of unmotivated students. Most (*n* = 5; 71%) did not use clarity with their word choice. The absence of thought towards the impact of their words on their continuations caused dialogue to move slowly or not at all. A few (*n* = 3; 43%) of these students included attribution tags to their statements, which did assist in some movement and slight character development, but was often ineffective. Overall, the dialogue did not relate to the plot, but instead mirrored daily conversations that could possibly be heard between two peers. There

was a single individual who completely excluded the use of dialogue from their writing altogether. Considering the resources provided in the planning packet and the additional discussions between the instructor and students in conjunction to this writing assessment, this suggests there was truly a lack of interest in completing the task.

Use of Text Evidence

Unmotivated students struggled with including textual evidence. This was a critical piece of the initial task and the majority of the annotation and planning process were centered around its inclusion. Some students (n = 2; 29%) showed little evidence of investment during the prewriting sessions, however demonstrated that they did retain portions of the discussion and were able to apply it to their writing. These students still did not include more than four-character traits, which was less than half of the required pieces. The majority (n = 5; 71%), however, demonstrated more evidence of retention from the discussions and included five to seven traits, although all were explicitly stated. This suggests that was little critical thinking in relation to word choice and the inclusion of text evidence.

Aside from the required number of character traits, students also needed to include precise setting details. Most students (n = 5; 71%) included two or fewer settings details, even after creating a specific list of options to reference and utilize during the prewriting planning. The remaining students (n = 2; 29%) included three, which still did not entirely meet the full requirement. Excluding these requirements insinuates further evidence that there was a lack of interest towards the task.

Discussion

The observations and conclusions made during this study illustrated the importance of motivation, but also curriculum elements which need to be reinforced continuously after

introduction. It was notably evident when students lost sight of key grammatical features, or the initial task requirements. This is important to understand as it does impact the effectiveness of the instruction and overall quality of work observed during the study.

Grammar

Grammar usage and comprehension is an intricate part of language, and necessary for the writing process. After the completion of the writing assessment, it was apparent how critical grammar instruction was to the success of this group and all future students. The motivated students demonstrated more of an urgency to learn, retain, and then exhibit their new or refreshed skills, while the unmotivated students appeared to work with the primary goal of not wanting to be assigned this task again. There were a few unmotivated students who had periodic moments of success which briefly opened their eyes to how rewarding their own work ethic can be, but this did not occur often. The grammar skills required within this particular task are not out of the ordinary. Students have been coached and instructed on how to capitalize a letter since they learned their alphabet and began utilizing them to indicate a new though since the early elementary grades. A similar time frame had been followed with the inclusion of punctuation at the end of each sentence. Although, the overall understanding of a fragment and how to correct one within their own or a peer's writing is not as perfected as their understanding of capitalization or ending punctuation. This being said all students exhibited confidence within this writing task and showed they had the ability to write in complete thoughts.

The ability to apply capitalization and punctuation to writing is critical. Students must develop these skills for future writing tasks and English courses in more advanced grade levels. Based on the percentage of overall motivated students, there is emergence of a pattern of students with the determination and skill sets to demonstrate a greater level of potential success. Even with

foreseeable success for many of the observed, all grammar skills require review and practice application either prior or in conjunction with any writing task, especially tasks with specific or unique requirements. The observations and patterns seen within this particular writing task ensure that skills are being retained by the majority of students, without considering motivation levels, however there is no negative to asking students to continue to practice application of grammar techniques as they move forward with more critically demanding writing tasks. For teachers of upper level English courses, this may not require the same amount of class instructional time or preparation as for a teacher who works primarily with younger, more inexperienced writers. Either way the instructional experience received coincides with the success experienced by the students, but must be paired with a visible level of motivation.

These skills and the critical thinking that is paired with the process are not only beneficial to the English Language Arts content teachers, but also applicable across all content areas, especially once students enter secondary education content. There are few content areas that do not require some element of writing application, whether it be research or creative based writing.

Aside from impacting the direction that curriculum flows, the task and skills included have the potential to impact teacher evaluations. A portion of teacher evaluation rankings, in the state of Illinois, come from student growth assessments. This is important to consider because if students are not showing a functioning level of understanding or mastery of the assessed skills, this indicates that the individual teacher is not effectively teaching the skills or concepts. The ultimate goal would be mastery of all skills, but this is not always achievable depending on the foundation established by previous years of instruction.

Motion and Dialogue

Transitions and dialogue proved to be more difficult for many of the students within the initial writing stages. The use of transitional phrases is a fairly new writing concept for sixth graders. Up until this stage in the development of their writing skills, many students primarily relied on transitions such as *then, next, first, second, third,* and *also*. Although, these were commonly used in the original text which the students were asked to continue the style of, they were challenged to include more specific transitions such as *eventually, additionally, afterwards,* and *suddenly,* or phrases like *in the morning,* and *after the dragon left*. All students had these transitions or phrases in their planning packet. In relation to this writing task, it became apparent and critical that students needed to be reminded of the reference list. The constant reminders may have been necessary due to the narrow experiences this particular group of students had been exposed to, or the lack of variety in transitions that have been introduced up until this point in their English courses. While this is speculation, it does indicate that teachers of younger grades may need to broaden the options presented to younger writers. Giving students the opportunity to choose their own words allows for a greater chance of maintained motivation.

In addition to the selection and appropriate use of transitions, students were instructed in how to use dialogue to create motion within their writing. While all students were provided with reference resources illustrating correct punctuation to utilize during the writing process, the more obvious difficulties appeared within the content. The minimal depth that was provided by even the most motivated students leads to the belief that dialogue content should be introduced sooner in earlier grades. Dialogue can be explored more in depth through conversation and it can be more evident to students how lack of substance slows or entirely stales a discussion. This is critical for all writers to understand, especially for success with creative or narrative writing related tasks.

Teachers need to use dialogue and conversations creatively to help support writing development, but also to demonstrate proper speaking syntax. Speaking abilities are the first forms of language to form, so it is only beneficial to relate back to those skills when trying to establish a foundation for new concepts.

Text Evidence Inclusion

As mentioned during the initial explanation of the study, a narrative continuation is dependent on the inclusion of textual evidence from an original narrative. Textual evidence helps to establish the continuation of character traits, setting details and order of events, as well as to determine a conclusion point for the students' writing. Within the classroom, it is imperative for teachers to discuss and identify meaningful pieces of textual evidence versus pieces that may not offer the depth or detail needed to mimic the style of the original author. The process of identifying key details or evidence from the text can be introduced in the earlier elementary grades as it works to help support reading comprehension skills. These skills need to be continually exercised and activated and should be utilized at all levels of English curriculum, not just in the early years. It was evident that this group of students would have benefited from earlier expose to the process of using direct quotes to help describe a situation or character, but even though the difficulties were apparent the majority experienced some level of success when effectively motivated or attentive.

Standardized testing requires students to complete two or three original writing pieces, depending on the assessment. One of the assessments typically require the use of textual evidence in order to either continue a plot or to support an opinion. Due to these standardized assessment elements, administration needs to be aware of the content students are being exposed to prior to testing. Within this specific district, the task was designed to mirror elements that mirror past writing tasks that have appeared in these standardized assessments. These assessments contribute to

funding that is made available to the district through the state. Aside from funding being determined by similar writing tasks, which are evaluated through the state, writing progress is also monitored and used to establish goals for students who receive special education services and supports. The success of these goals and established supports add into funding received by the district.

Impacts on Future Research

Building off of past research, this study and task were very intentional with its requirements and the process. During the initial brainstorming process, which was identified as one of the most critical components by previous research, students were challenged to use critical thinking skills to determine essential character and setting details to the original plot. Brainstorming and annotating was treated almost as a separate task from the writing process in order to illustrate the level of comprehension and care needed to cover all the required elements. Within this particular task, the content and overall process aligned with the state curriculum standards and expectations outlined for sixth grade students. These expectations are in agreeance with previous research completed under the category of narrative or creative writing. The concept that students need to have a working understanding of the topic was reinforced as it became evident when students who were not motivated or engaged in the brainstorming and annotating process misused or added irrelevant details that did not work with the plot or even their continuation of the plot. Previous research indicated that although creative writing can be unique to the author, there are still fundamental elements which must be recognized and maintained in order for the writing to be deemed successful.

Previous research had stated that the revision process can be difficult for struggling writers. The observations made during this particular ten-day study supported the previous discussions. The students who displayed the most unmotivated behaviors struggled the most with offering revision feedback and applying peer feedback to their own writing. The suggestion in prior studies to

integrate goal setting into the writing and revision processes offered an additional layer of motivation for a larger portion of the participating students. By adding the personalized goal, it gave students a firm and achievable objective that they can independently strive for while writing. The additional personalization of their writing gives the students the appearance of uniqueness within a structured task. The goals set also allow for the instructor guide the discussions more intentionally.

Overall, this study aligns with previous research. The purposefulness of the revision process and setting intentional and achievable independent goals adds additional structure that many students need or desire in order to attain writing success. Motivation is an underlaying factor to student success and must be paired with strong, appropriate pedagogy. Structure is critical, especially at earlier grade levels, since this is where the foundation is developed.

Limitations

As in any research study, there were limitations. The most notable areas of difficulty included the student groupings, interference from the global pandemic, student attendance, and the inconsistencies in daily schedule during the assessment period. Although, there may not have been a profound negative impact on all participating students from these limitations, some students were definitely challenged during this process.

Student Pairings

Due to the relatively small participating groups in the student pool, there were restrictions with the partnerships created in order to complete the revision process. There were two participating classes, split into groups of 16 and 25 respectively. Since these groupings are uneven and the teacher had no control over the sizes of each class, it put noticeable limitations on partnerships assigned during discussions and while offering revision feedback. The pairings were selected based on ability levels, with motivations considered, but there were about a quarter of the partnerships

which did not appear as successful compared to others within the groups. The most evident concerns with the pairings came from mismatched motivation levels between students. The students who were more motivated did not receive the same benefits from the peer revision process as their peers who were not motived to complete this step in the writing process.

Pandemic

The current pandemic put a sense of urgency on the completion of the overall process. The assessment was designed to take ten school days, which was achieved, however with the governor's stay-at-home mandate, there was a rush to work through the revision and editing days. This could have had a negative effect on some of the final drafts, as some students would have benefited from a more structured small group discussion on how to give specific feedback. The pandemic took the focus away from the students' academic work and added an outside stressor. Several of my students come from single parent homes and are aware of the financial concerns or difficulties their parent faces. The uncertainty of the upcoming weeks has become a major point of tension for those students, as well as the rest of the school population, and they were not able to put their full focus or effort into the writing task, or any academic task for that matter.

Attendance

Between the two groups of English Language Arts students, there are several students who are routinely absent from the building, typically for multiple days at a time. The inconsistency in their attendance creates gaps in instruction, and it often is made apparent when it comes to assessments. This was no different when it came to getting them back on track with the pace that had been set for the narrative continuation process. It was particularly difficult to recreate the discussions that occurred while annotating and completing the planning packet; it was easy enough to have them

copy the notes, but they missed out on the analytical conversations which only worked to add more meaning and strength to the notes being collected.

Aside from being absent from school, there are six students who are pulled from ELA class time in order to participate in band lessons each week. Each lesson runs for approximately 30 minutes, which means that during this ten-day assessment period (two weeks), these students lost 60 minutes of in class instruction and work time. Although all six are not pulled at the same time, it still disrupts the flow and adds an extra level of distraction when they return to class.

Daily Schedule

The daily schedule that this group of students follows is categorized as block scheduling. They are able to receive English Language Arts instruction daily for 82 minutes. However, during this writing assessment period the class time was not consistent each day. There was a half attendance day, which broke one class period down to approximately 45 minutes. The students were also required to participate in a socio-emotional learning group on one day during this observation period, which shortened an additional class period to approximately 62 minutes. These shortened classes are approximate due to the lack of bell signals on abbreviated or varied attendance days. The bells, with the exception of the start and end signals, are turned off in order to avoid confusion among staff members trying to track a modified schedule.

Next Step

The ultimate goal was to determine which supports would benefit the majority of participating students. After reviewing the process, the in-depth initial brainstorming and annotating was beneficial due to the variety of details identified and categorized. However, the depth of information documented potentially had a negative impact on a portion of the participating students' motivation level. It could be interpreted as overwhelming to a student who may have gaps in the

skills needed to complete the task. In the future, it may be more beneficial to review the key grammatical elements before introducing the writing task. This way when these components are brought up during brainstorming, the instructor will not need to halt the writing task entirely to reteach the skills.

As the overall process was successful, even for students who may not have maintained their motivation level, the question becomes: could this process be effective with any other writing task, regardless of the genre? Based on the current observations and data collected, it is believed that this process, specifically by providing a very structured and in-depth brainstorming, can be applied and help students experience success with their writing. In addition to keeping the structure, the modeled and detailed revision process is also necessary in order to help foster success.

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Appendix A

Narrative Continuation Original Text

Dragon,

John Gardner

Dragon

There was once a king whose kingdom was plagued by a dragon. The king did not know which way to turn. The king's knights were all cowards who hid under their beds whenever the dragon came in sight, so they were of no use to the king at all. And the king's wizard could not help either because, being old, he had forgotten his magic spells. Nor could the wizard look up the spells that had slipped his mind, for he had unfortunately misplaced his wizard's book many years before. The king was at his wit's end.

plagued (plāgd) v. tormented

Every time there was a full moon the dragon came out of his lair and ravaged the countryside. He frightened maidens and stopped up chimneys and broke store windows and set people's clocks back and made dogs bark until no one could hear himself think.

ravaged (rav' ijd) v. violently destroyed; ruined

He tipped over fences and robbed graves and put frogs in people's drinking water and tore the last chapters out of novels and changed house numbers around so that people crawled into bed with their neighbors.

He stole spark plugs out of people's cars and put firecrackers in people's cigars and stole the clappers from all the church bells and sprung every bear trap for miles around so the bears could wander wherever they pleased.

And to top it all off, he changed around all the roads in the kingdom so that people could not get anywhere except by starting out in the wrong direction.

"That," said the king in a fury, "is enough!" And he called a meeting of everyone in the kingdom.

Now it happened that there lived in the kingdom a wise old cobbler who had a wife and three sons. The cobbler and his family came to the king's meeting and stood way in back by the door, for the cobbler had a feeling that since he was nobody important there had probably been some mistake, and no doubt the king had intended the meeting for everyone in the kingdom except his family and him.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the king when everyone was present, "I've put up with that dragon as long as I can. He has got to be stopped."

✓Reading Check

What is the problem in the kingdom?

All the people whispered amongst themselves, and the king smiled, pleased with the impression he had made.

But the wise cobbler said gloomily, "It's all very well to talk about it—but how are you going to do it?"

And now all the people smiled and winked as if to say, "Well, King, he's got you there!"

The king frowned.

"It's not that His Majesty hasn't tried," the queen spoke up loyally.

"Yes," said the king, "I've told my knights again and again that they ought to slay that dragon. But I can't *force* them to go. I'm not a tyrant."

"Why doesn't the wizard say a magic spell?" asked the cobbler.

"He's done the best he can," said the king.

The wizard blushed and everyone looked embarrassed. "I used to do all sorts of spells and chants when I was younger," the wizard explained. "But I've lost my spell book, and I begin to fear I'm losing my memory too. For instance, I've been trying for days to recall one spell I used to do. I forget, just now, what the deuce it was for. It went something like—

Bimble,
Wimble,
Cha, cha
CHOOMPF!

Suddenly, to everyone's surprise, the queen turned into a rosebush.

"Oh dear," said the wizard.

"Now you've done it," groaned the king.

"Poor Mother," said the princess.

"I don't know what can have happened," the wizard said nervously, "but don't worry, I'll have her changed back in a jiffy." He shut his eyes and racked his brain for a spell that would change her back.

But the king said quickly, "You'd better leave well enough alone. If you change her into a rattlesnake we'll have to chop off her head."

Meanwhile the cobbler stood with his hands in his pockets, sighing at the waste of time. "About the dragon . . . " he began.

"Oh yes," said the king. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give the princess's hand in marriage to anyone who can make the dragon stop."

"It's not enough," said the cobbler. "She's a nice enough girl, you understand. But how would an ordinary person support her?

Literature in context Humanities Connection

Traditional Dragon Stories

Much of the humor in "Dragon, Dragon" comes from the way it turns traditional dragon stories upside down. For example, in one of the most famous dragon stories of all time, *Beowulf*, the king is a wise and noble man. A terrible dragon has been attacking his hall and killing his warriors. When brave Beowulf, a true hero, learns the king needs help, he sails quickly to the rescue, humbly yet courageously presenting himself as the man for the job.

Frontispiece of The Boy's King Arthur, N.C. Wyeth

tyrant (tī' rənt) *n.* cruel, unjust ruler

Also, what about those of us that are already married?"

"In that case," said the king, "I'll offer the princess's hand or half the kingdom or both—whichever is most convenient."

The cobbler scratched his chin and considered it. "It's not enough," he said at last. "It's a good enough kingdom, you understand, but it's too much responsibility."

"Take it or leave it," the king said.

"I'll leave it," said the cobbler. And he shrugged and went home.

But the cobbler's eldest son thought the bargain was a good one, for the princess was very beautiful and he liked the idea of having half the kingdom to run as he pleased. So he said to the king, "I'll accept those terms, Your Majesty. By tomorrow morning the dragon will be slain."

"Bless you!" cried the king.

"Hooray, hooray, hooray!" cried all the people, throwing their hats in the air.

Reading Strategy
Comparing and Contrasting Which character, the cobbler or his eldest son, seems more sensible? **[Explain]**

The cobbler's eldest son beamed with pride, and the second eldest looked at him enviously. The youngest son said timidly, "Excuse me, Your Majesty, but don't you think the queen looks a little unwell? If I were you I think I'd water her."

"Good heavens," cried the king, glancing at the queen who had been changed into a rosebush, "I'm glad you mentioned it!"

Now the cobbler's eldest son was very clever and was known far and wide for how quickly he could multiply fractions in his head. He was perfectly sure he could slay the dragon by somehow or other playing a trick on him, and he didn't feel that he needed his wise old father's advice. But he thought it was only polite to ask, and so he went to his father, who was working as usual at his cobbler's bench, and said, "Well, Father, I'm off to slay the dragon. Have you any advice to give me?"

The cobbler thought a moment and replied, "When and if you come to the dragon's lair, recite the following poem:

Dragon, dragon, how do you do?
I've come from the king to murder you.

Say it very loudly and firmly and the dragon will fall, God willing, at your feet."

"How curious!" said the eldest son. And he thought to himself, "The old man is not as wise as I thought. If I say something like that to the dragon, he will eat me up in an instant. The way to kill a dragon is to out-fox him." And keeping his opinion to himself, the eldest son set forth on his quest.

Reading Check
What does the father tell his eldest son to do when he gets to the dragon's lair?

When he came at last to the dragon's lair, which was a cave, the eldest son slyly disguised himself as a peddler and knocked on the door and called out, "Hello there!"

"There's nobody home!" roared a voice.

The voice was as loud as an earthquake, and the eldest son's knees knocked together in terror.

"I don't come to trouble you," the eldest son said meekly. "I merely thought you might be interested in looking at some of our brushes. Or if you'd prefer," he added quickly, "I could leave our catalogue with you and I could drop by again, say, early next week."

"I don't want any brushes," the voice roared, "and I especially don't want any brushes next week."

"Oh," said the eldest son. By now his knees were knocking together so badly that he had to sit down.

Suddenly a great shadow fell over him, and the eldest son looked up. It was the dragon. The eldest son drew his sword, but the dragon lunged and swallowed him in a single gulp, sword and all, and the eldest son found himself in the dark of the dragon's belly. "What a fool I was not to listen to my wise old father!" thought the eldest son. And he began to weep bitterly.

Literary Analysis
Plot and Theme What lesson does the cobbler's son learn as events unfold?

"Well," sighed the king the next morning, "I see the dragon has not been slain yet."

"I'm just as glad, personally," said the princess, sprinkling the queen. "I would have had to marry that eldest son, and he had warts."

Now the cobbler's middle son decided it was his turn to try. The middle son was very strong and he was known far and wide for being able to lift up the corner of a church. He felt perfectly sure he could slay the dragon by simply laying into him, but he thought it would be only polite to ask his father's advice. So he went to his father and said to him, "Well, Father, I'm off to slay the dragon. Have you any advice for me?"

The cobbler told the middle son exactly what he'd told the eldest.

"When and if you come to the dragon's lair, recite the following poem:

Dragon, dragon, how do you do?
I've come from the king to murder you.

Say it very loudly and firmly, and the dragon will fall, God willing, at your feet."

"What an odd thing to say," thought the middle son. "The old man is not as wise as I thought. You have to take these dragons by surprise." But he kept his opinion to himself and set forth.

When he came in sight of the dragon's lair, the middle son spurred his horse to a gallop and thundered into the entrance swinging his sword with all his might.

But the dragon had seen him while he was still a long way off, and being very clever, the dragon had crawled up on top of the door so that when the son came charging in he went under the

Dick Whittington on his way to London from My Nursery Story Book, Private Collection

◀ Critical Viewing
Does the boy in this picture look like a dragon slayer? Explain.
[Evaluate]

dragon and on to the back of the cave and slammed into the wall. Then the dragon chuckled and got down off the door, taking his time, and strolled back to where the man and the horse lay unconscious from the terrific blow. Opening his mouth as if for a yawn, the dragon swallowed the middle son in a single gulp and put the horse in the freezer to eat another day.

✓ Reading Check
What happens to the middle son when he arrives at the dragon's lair?

"What a fool I was not to listen to my wise old father," thought the middle son when he came to in the dragon's belly. And he too began to weep bitterly.

That night there was a full moon, and the dragon ravaged the countryside so terribly that several families moved to another kingdom.

"Well," sighed the king in the morning, "still no luck in this dragon business, I see."

"I'm just as glad, myself," said the princess, moving her mother, pot and all, to the window where the sun could get at her. "The cobbler's middle son was a kind of humpback."

Now the cobbler's youngest son saw that his turn had come. He was very upset and nervous, and he wished he had never been born. He was not clever, like his eldest brother, and he was not strong, like his second-eldest brother. He was a decent, honest boy who always minded his elders.

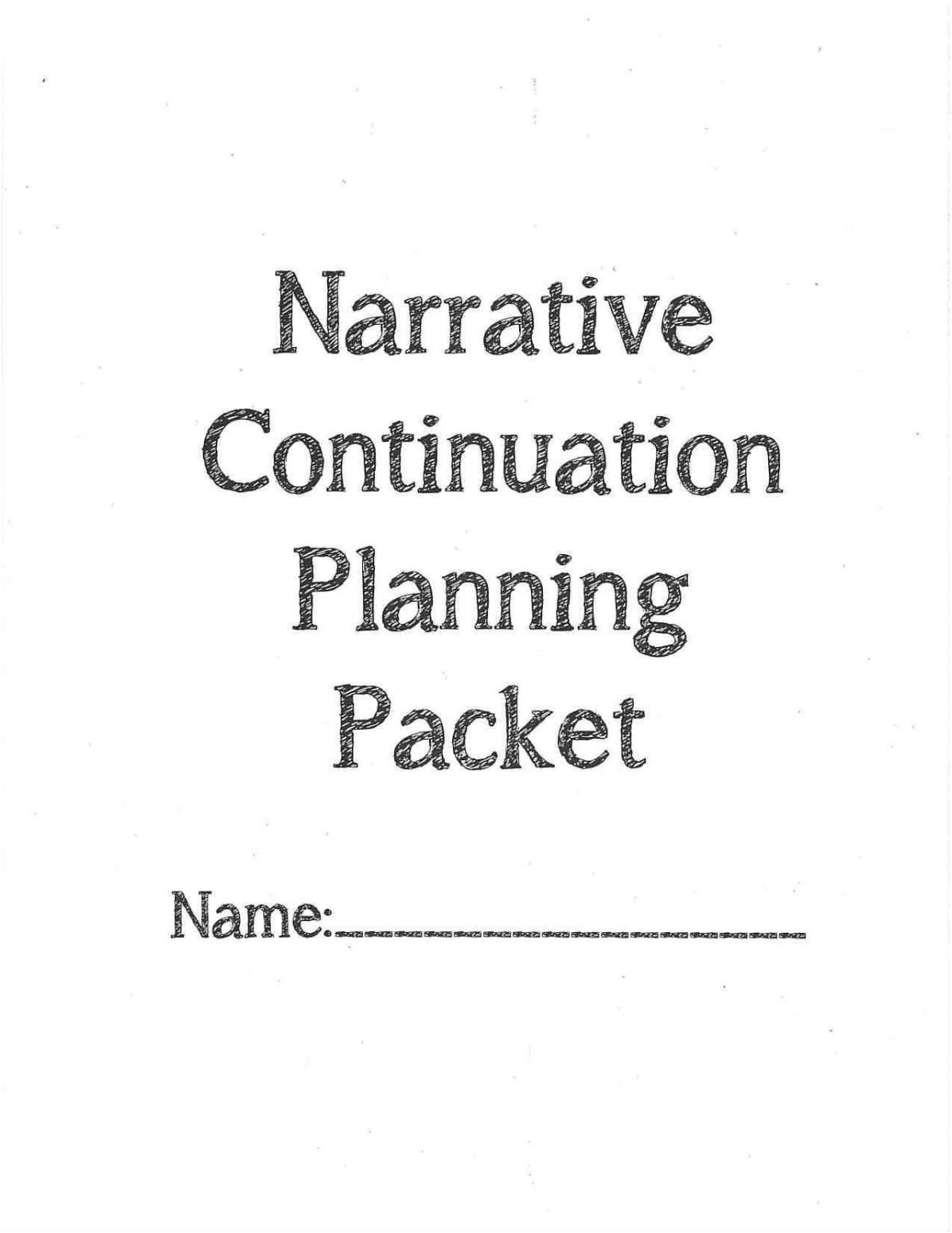
Reading Strategy
Comparing and Contrasting What is the most important difference between the youngest son and his brothers?

He borrowed a suit of armor from a friend of his who was a knight, and when the youngest son put the armor on it was so heavy he could hardly walk. From another knight he borrowed a sword, and that was so heavy that the only way the youngest son could get it to the dragon's lair was to drag it along behind his horse like a plow.

When everything was in readiness, the youngest son went for a last conversation with his father.

Appendix B

Student Planning and Resource Packet



Introduction Organization

-Grabs the reader's attention by effectively and uniquely continuing the context set by the original narrative.

-**Point of view matches** that of the original story, "Dragon, Dragon," and is clearly established and maintained throughout the entire narrative.

-Sequence of events is logically and effectively presented in **chronological order** without gaps in time.

Development

-Continuity of setting details is clearly demonstrated by incorporating **4 or more setting details** from the original story "Dragon, Dragon."

-Continuity of the characters' traits (what they look like and what they act like) from the original "Dragon, Dragon" story are clearly demonstrated by incorporating **more than 7 character traits** in the narrative continuation story.

The characters' thoughts, feelings, observations, reactions, and dialogue are based on the original story.

Transitions & Paragraphing

-Use transition words, phrases, and clauses throughout your entire story (including sentence openers) to help tell your story.

-Appropriate paragraphing follows narrative structure (change paragraphs when there is a change in time, location, or speaker)

Language Vocabulary

-Precise word choice enhances clarity throughout the entire narrative.

-Clearly maintains the writing style of the original story. (Speak the way the narrator speaks! Write the way the narrator writes!)

-Precise **sensory details** and **strong verbs** (sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell) are used consistently throughout the narrative continuation. (Show rather than tell!)

~~*I walked down the hallway.*~~

I shyly and awkwardly slumped down the crowded hallway with my head down, hoping not to make eye contact with anyone.

Conclusion

-Effective ending follows from the narrated experiences or events. Your story should come to a reasonable ending.

Reread "Dragon, Dragon." Highlight any of the following:

- setting details (where AND when story takes place)
- character traits (what characters look like OR where their personalities are described)
- characters' thoughts, feelings, actions, or dialogue
- creative word choice
- descriptive words

1. What point of view is used in "Dragon, Dragon"? Who narrates the story?

---

2. [SETTING] Where and when does "Dragon, Dragon" take place?

---

3. Find 4 descriptive examples of the settings in "Dragon, Dragon."

Page Number:	Details about the setting:

4. "Dragon, Dragon" is written in a very unique, descriptive style. The language is full of adjectives (words that describe nouns) and sensory details (what can be seen, heard, smelled, felt, or tasted). It is also fun to read, and is always very creative. Find 3 examples of descriptive, detailed language from "Dragon, Dragon."

Page Number:	Example:

The following are all **transitions** that should be used by 6th graders in their writing:

To begin with,	"To begin with" goes great at the start of paragraph 1 or when just beginning to discuss something.
To start off,	"To start off" goes great at the start of paragraph 1 or when just beginning to discuss something.
Additionally,	"Additionally" is used to add more information to your paragraph or essay.
Also,	"Also" is used to add more information to your paragraph or essay.
To add,	"To add" is used to add more information to your paragraph or essay.
Ultimately,	"Ultimately" is used to sum up or restate your main point. It also replaces "In conclusion" which we don't use in 6th grade anymore.
Overall,	"Overall" is also used to sum up a paragraph or restate your main point. It also replaces "In conclusion" which we don't use in 6th grade anymore.

***Notice that each transition above has a comma after it.**

Write a paragraph describing how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Use as many of the transitions from the list as you can.

DIALOGUE CHEAT SHEET

"It looks like it might snow today," suggested Patrick as he walked out of his house.

Sponge Bob replied while shaking his head, "I'm pretty sure it can't snow under the sea."

FACTS TO REMEMBER WHEN WRITING WITH DIALOGUE:

1. Anything being said by characters must be in quotes.

2. Pay attention to ALL punctuation marks and what should be capitalized.

3. Include attribution tags and use creative verbs other than said.

4. Begin a new paragraph when the dialogue switches from one character to another.

"Are you excited about the dance tonight?" asked Brittany excitedly.

Krissy answered back as she picked out her outfit, "Yes! I wonder if Jack will be there. I really hope he will be."

Brittany laughed and stated, "Jack totally likes you! I bet he will be there!"

Character's Name	Character Traits	Details from story
King		
Wizard		
Cobbler		
Cobbler's wife		

Eldest Son		
Middle Son		
Youngest Son		
Dragon		
Queen		
Queen's Daughter		

"Said" is not the only verb to use in dialogue. The following are all great choices of verbs to use in narratives with dialogue.

acknowledged (if you acknowledge someone, you respond to them)
admitted
agreed
answered
argued
asked
barked
begged
bellowed (a deep roaring shout or sound)
blustered (talk in a loud, agressive way)
bragged
complained
confessed
cried
demanded
denied
giggled
hinted
hissed
howled
interrupted
laughed
lied
mumbled
muttered
nagged
pleaded (begged)
promised
questioned
remembered
replied
requested
roared
sang
screamed
screeched
shouted
sighed
snarled
sobbed
threatened
warned
whimpered
whined
whispered
wondered
yelled

Appendix C

Personal and Peer Editing Checklist

Narrative Continuation Check List for: _____

I. Introduction/Organization

		Yes, my narrative does that.	No, my narrative does not do that.
Narrative Lead	Introduction grabs readers' attention by **effectively** and **uniquely** continuing the context set by the original narrative.	Write your first sentence here:	
Point of View	Point of view matches that of the original narrative and is clearly established and maintained throughout the entire narrative.	What point of view did you write in?	
Sequencing	Sequence of events is logically and effectively presented in chronological order without gaps in time.		

II. Development

		Yes, my narrative does that.	**No, my narrative does not do that.**
Exposition (Setting)	**4 or more** setting details from the original book are used in my narrative. All setting details are realistic.	Before checking "yes," highlight the 4 or more setting details in your narrative in YELLOW.	
Exposition (Characters)	**7 or more** character trait details from the original book are used in my narrative story.	Before checking "yes," highlight the 7 or more character trait details in your narrative in GREEN.	

III. Transitions

		Yes, my narrative does that.	No, my narrative does not do that.
Organization	At least 5 transition words and phrases are used throughout my **entire narrative story**. I use transitions at the beginnings of sentences AND in the middle of sentences.	Before checking "yes," highlight all the transitions in your narrative in LIGHT BLUE. Use your transition packet for help. List the 5 transitions here: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	
Paragraphing (Is everything properly indented?)	Appropriate paragraphing follows narrative structure (change in time, location, speaker, etc.) for entire narrative.		

IV. Language Vocabulary

		Yes, my narrative does that.	No, my narrative does not do that.
Clarity (a.k.a. Clearness)	The words I chose to use throughout my narrative are clear and appropriate for a 6th grader. My sentences all make sense.		
Style	Used at least 1 simile and 1 hyperbole in my narrative.	**Write your simile and hyperbole here** Simile: Hyperbole:	
Sensory Details & Strong Verbs	Precise sensory details and strong verbs (sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell) are used throughout my **entire** narrative continuation.	**Write your sensory details here:** **How is SIGHT described:** **How is SOUND described:** **How is TASTE described:** **How is FEELING described:** **How is SMELL described:**	

Appendix D

Narrative Continuation Writing Assessment Rubric

6th Grade Language Arts- Narrative Continuation Rubric

Narrative Progression	Narrative Focus:	Excels	Exceeds	Meets	Does not meet	Warning
Introduction Organization	1. Narrative Lead		Grabs the reader's attention by effectively and uniquely continuing the context set by the original narrative. (4)	Continues the context set by the original narrative. (3)	Attempts to continue the context set by the original narrative. (2)	No attempt at a narrative lead continuing the context set by the original narrative. (0)
	2. Point of View	Point of view matches that of the original narrative and is clearly established and maintained throughout the entire narrative. 0 slips in point of view (5)	Point of view matches that of the original narrative and is established and maintained throughout most of the narrative. 1 slip in point of view (4)	Point of view matches that of the original narrative and is established and maintained throughout some of the narrative. 2-3 slips in point of view (3)	Point of view matches that of the original narrative and is established and maintained throughout little of the narrative. 4-5 slips in point of view (2)	Point of view does not match that of the original narrative and/or is not established. 6 or more slips in point of view (1)
	3. Sequencing	Sequence of events is logically and effectively presented in chronological order without gaps in time. (4)	Sequence of events is logically presented with 1 minor gap in time. (3)	Sequence of events is logically presented with 2-3 minor or 1 large gap in time. (2)	Sequence of events is presented with 2-3 major gaps in time or may have lapses in logic. (1)	Sequence of events is not logically presented and contains more than 3 major gaps in time or logic. (0)
Development	4. Narrative Development (Exposition): Setting	Continuity of setting details is clearly demonstrated by incorporating (and identifying per teacher's directions) 4 or more setting details from original narrative. No unrealistic setting elements are used in narrative continuation. (5)	Continuity of setting details is clearly demonstrated by incorporating (and identifying per teacher's directions) 3 setting details from original narrative. No unrealistic setting elements are used in narrative continuation. (4)	Continuity of setting details is clearly demonstrated by incorporating (and identifying per teacher's directions) 2 setting details from original narrative. No unrealistic setting elements are used in narrative continuation. (3)	Continuity of setting details is clearly demonstrated by incorporating (and identifying per teacher's directions) 1 setting detail from original narrative. AND/OR 1 or more unrealistic setting element(s) is/are used in narrative continuation. (2)	Continuity of setting details is NOT demonstrated at any point in the narrative continuation. 0 setting details from original narrative and 1 or more unrealistic setting elements are used in narrative continuation. (0)

6th Grade Language Arts- Narrative Continuation Rubric

	5. Narrative Development (Exposition): Characters	Continuity of both main characters' traits from original narrative is clearly demonstrated by incorporating (and identifying per teacher's directions) 10 or more character trait details from original narrative. Narrative continuation accurately depicts plausible characters' thoughts, feelings, observations, reactions, etc. based on details from original narrative. (10)	Continuity of both main characters' traits from original narrative is clearly demonstrated by incorporating (and identifying per teacher's directions) 8-9 character trait details from original narrative. Narrative continuation accurately depicts plausible characters' thoughts, feelings, observations, reactions, etc. based on details from original narrative. (8)	Continuity of both main characters' traits from original narrative is clearly demonstrated by incorporating (and identifying per teacher's directions) 5-7 character trait details from original narrative. Narrative continuation accurately depicts plausible characters' thoughts, feelings, observations, reactions, etc. based on details from original narrative. (7)	Continuity of both main characters' traits from original narrative is clearly demonstrated by incorporating (and identifying per teacher's directions) 2-4 character trait details from original narrative. AND/OR 1 or more unrealistic character trait(s) is/are used in narrative continuation. (5)	Continuity of character trait details is NOT demonstrated at any point in the narrative continuation. 0 character trait details from original narrative are demonstrated. AND 1 or more unrealistic character trait(s) is/are used in narrative continuation. (4)
Transitions	**6. Organization**	A variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses (including sentence openers) are used to convey sequence and signal shifts between time frames and settings throughout entire narrative. (5)	Transition words, phrases, and clauses (including sentence openers) are used to convey sequence and signal shifts between time frames and settings throughout most of narrative. (4)	Transition words, phrases, and clauses (including sentence openers) are used to convey sequence and signal shifts between time frames and settings throughout little of the narrative. (3)	Transition words, phrases, and clauses (including sentence openers) are NOT used to convey sequence and signal shifts between time frames and settings. (2)	
	7. Paragraphing	Appropriate paragraphing follows narrative structure (change in time, location, speaker, etc.) for entire narrative. (5)	Appropriate paragraphing follows narrative structure (change in time, location, speaker, etc.) for most of the narrative. (4)	Appropriate paragraphing follows narrative structure (change in time, location, speaker, etc.) for some of the narrative. (3)	Appropriate paragraphing follows narrative structure (change in time, location, speaker, etc.) for little of the narrative. (2)	Limited evidence of appropriate paragraphing for narrative structure (change in time, location, speaker, etc.). (1)
Language Vocabulary	**8. Clarity**	Precise word choice enhances clarity throughout the entire narrative. (5)	Precise word choice enhances clarity throughout most of the narrative. (4)	Precise word choice enhances clarity throughout some of the narrative. (3)	Word choice was not precise and does not enhance clarity throughout most of the composition. (2)	Word choice was not precise and does not enhance clarity throughout the entire composition. (1)
	9. Style		Clearly maintains the style of the original narrative (use of figurative language, dialect, and voice). (3)	Maintains the style of the original narrative (use of figurative language, dialect, and voice). (2)		Does not maintain the style of the original narrative (use of figurative language, dialect, and voice). (0)

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10. Sensory Details and Strong Verbs (Show Rather Than Tell)	Precise sensory details and strong verbs (sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell) are used consistently throughout the narrative continuation to capture (show rather than tell) action and convey experience(s) and event(s). (10)	Precise sensory details and strong verbs (sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell) are used frequently in parts of the narrative continuation to capture (show rather than tell) action and convey experience(s) and event(s). (8)	Sensory details and strong verbs (sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell) are used sporadically throughout the narrative continuation to capture (show rather than tell) action and convey experience(s) and event(s). (7)	Sensory details and strong verbs (sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell) are used rarely in the narrative continuation to capture (show rather than tell) action and convey experience(s) and event(s). (5)	Sensory details and strong verbs (sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell) are NOT used to capture (show rather than tell) action and convey experience(s) and event(s) in the narrative. (4)
Conclusion **11. Narrative Ending**	Effective ending follows from the narrated experiences or events. (4)	Ending follows from the narrated experiences or events. (3)	Ending attempts to follow from the narrated experiences or events (but is not completely successful). (2)	Includes an ending but does not follow from the narrated experiences or events. (1)	Lacks a clear ending. (0)

Mechanics Focus:	Exceeds	Meets	Does not meet	Warning
12. Complete Sentences	0-2 fragments are present but do not impact the meaning and clarity of the majority of the narrative continuation. (10)	3-4 fragments are present but do not impact the meaning and clarity of the majority of the narrative continuation. (8)	5-6 fragments are present which begins to impact the meaning and clarity of some of the narrative continuation. (6)	7 or more fragments impact the overall meaning and clarity of the narrative continuation. (4)
13. Capitalization	0-2 errors in capitalization (proper nouns, dialogue, proper adjectives, starting sentences, titles of narrative, and the pronoun I) are made throughout the narrative continuation. (10)	3-5 errors in capitalization (proper nouns, dialogue, proper adjectives, starting sentences, titles of narrative, and the pronoun I) are made throughout the narrative continuation. (8)	6-8 errors in capitalization (proper nouns, dialogue, proper adjectives, starting sentences, titles of narrative, and the pronoun I) are made throughout the narrative continuation. (6)	9 or more errors in capitalization (proper nouns, dialogue, proper adjectives, starting sentences, titles of narrative, and the pronoun I) are made throughout the narrative continuation. (4)

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14. Punctuation	0-4 errors in punctuation (commas, end punctuation, apostrophes, and quotation marks) or run-on sentences are made throughout the narrative continuation. (15)	5-8 errors in punctuation (commas, end punctuation, apostrophes, and quotation marks) or run-on sentences are made throughout the narrative continuation. Errors begin to impact the meaning or clarity of some of the narrative continuation. (13)	9-12 errors in punctuation (commas, end punctuation, apostrophes, and quotation marks) or run-on sentences are made throughout the narrative continuation. Errors impact the meaning or clarity of much of the narrative continuation. (10)	13 or more errors in punctuation (commas, end punctuation, apostrophes, and quotation marks) or run-on sentences are made throughout the narrative continuation. Errors impact the meaning or clarity of the overall narrative continuation. (8)
15. Spelling	0-2 words spelled incorrectly in the narrative continuation. (5)	3-5 words spelled incorrectly in the narrative continuation. (4)	6-8 words spelled incorrectly in the narrative continuation. (3)	9 or more words spelled incorrectly in the narrative continuation. (2)

Comments: